GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:262
ANSWERED ON:10.02.2014
ENVIRONMENT CLEARANCES TO PROJECTS
Semmalai Shri S. ;Tagore Shri Manicka

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the project proposals received from various States pending for environmental and forest clearances during the last three years and the current year, State/UT-wise;

(b) the reasons for the pendency alongwith the time since they are pending, State/UT-wise and project-wise during the said period;

(c) the number of projects cleared during the said period State/UT/year-wise; and

(d) the steps taken/strategy proposed by the Government to facilitate early clearances of pending projects in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (DR. M. VEERAPPA MOILY)

(a)to (c): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT IN REPLY TO PARTS (a), (b) AND (c), OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 262 FOR ANSWER ON 10/02/2014 REGARDING ENVIRONMENT CLEARANCES TO PROJECTS

(a), (b) & (c) State/UT- wise details of pending/cleared project proposals received in the Ministry seeking environment/forest clearance during last three years and current year are at Annexure-I. The Ministry processes the cases of Environmental Clearance as per provisions in the EIA Notification, 2006 and its further amendments, which inter-alia prescribes the time limit for consideration of the proposals at various stages. Sometimes, delay occurs due to receipt of incomplete proposals, requirement of site inspection, public hearing and non-submission of the requisite information.

The proposals seeking diversion of forest land are examined and only those proposals where diversion of forest land is a bare minimum, and unavoidable, are accepted by the Central Government. Detailed site inspection is required in proposals involving more than 100 ha of forest land. Quite often the proposals received are not complete in all respects and the Central Government has to seek further details/ documents viz. Differential GPS Map of the area proposed for diversion, details of area identified for compensatory afforestation, details of compensatory levies realized from the user agency, compliance of Scheduled Tribe and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, etc. from the concerned State Governments. These are the main reasons of pendency of the proposals.

(d) This Ministry has taken various steps for bringing improvement in systems, so as to facilitate qualitative, sustainable, holistic decision making in a transparent and objective manner. It is a continuous process. Various steps taken by the Ministry to fast track the environment clearance process without compromising the quality of the appraisal or the integrity of the environment include continuous monitoring of status of pending projects, regular and longer duration meetings of Expert Appraisal Committees for consideration of projects in different sectors, streamlining of process etc. For further simplifying the process for grant of Environmental Clearance, the Ministry has recently issued guidelines for categorization of Category `B` projects/activities into Category `B1` & `B2'.

To facilitate scrutiny of the proposals seeking prior approval of the Central Government under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 in an effective manner, an elaborate institutional mechanism, both at the Central as well as State/Union Territory Governments level has been set up. In addition to this, MoEF has taken various initiatives for simplification of procedures for grant of forest clearances such as exemption of Border Road Organization (BRO) roads from the compliance of the Schedule Tribe and Other Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, relaxation to carry out compensatory afforestation (CA) over an equivalent area proposed for diversion in a degraded forest land, exemption of linear projects from obtaining the consent of Gram Sabha(s) unless rights of Primitive Tribal Groups are affected, etc. The Ministry takes prompt action to consider the projects for forest clearance when projects, complete in all respects, are received.